**Patient Forum Minutes –24.02.2025**

**Attendees: 17 patients in attendance**

**Rebecca Seaman– Practice Manager**

**Paula Goldstraw – IT & Admin Manager**

**Angela Hill – Quality Coordinator – Minute Taker**

**Apologies: 2 patients sent apologies**

**Becky thanked everyone for coming and welcomed the new members and introduced Paula and Angela as well as Kat and Sarah from the PCN Social Prescribing Team.**

One of the new members asked how the group worked and another asked how you raised an agenda item? Becky explained that you can raise an agenda item when you receive an invite for the meeting. She also explained that there are certain items that are always discussed; our patient survey regarding the questions and then the answers we receive. We then suggest an action plan which we bring to the group and ask if they think anything is missing.

A clinician is not present at the meeting but if there was a request for anything clinical we would invite a GP. The group is not about individual scenarios, it is about processes.

A new member thought it would be helpful to have an induction for new members. The group has been running since 2013 and we have not been asked that before. It could be considered if there was a few members in one session.

A member asked about holding the meeting in the evening instead of lunchtime to attract other members. We have tried this and many other things to attract a more diverse group of members but nothing has been successful. Balmoral does have the biggest patient forum in the PCN.

1. **Talk from Social Prescribers –** Kat & Sarah introduced themselves. They are two of the five members of the team covering 54,000 patients. They spoke about what Social Prescribing is and the groups they are involved in and have set up; Wellbeing Walk, Wellbeing Café, Carer’s Group, Parkinson’s Group, Dementia Carers, Age Concern Drop Ins. They advertise in surgeries and on their websites and they have a Facebook page. Their telephone number is a voicemail service and one of the team will call the patient back within 5 days. The team are coming in to Balmoral to speak to the Care Navigators to give them an update at this month’s half day closing training afternoon. They work closely with carers and with Social Services and they go into Deal Hospital. They are trying to improve accessibility. They have been to the sheltered housing in the area and left leaflets about their service. They are keen to have volunteers to help with the groups. The team had some lovely feedback from one of the PPG members. As Deal is not seen as an area of deprivation, funding is low but the team are always looking for new ways to access funding and regularly interact with the ICB.
2. **Matters Arising from the last meeting:** Ear Syringing – This is ongoing. Our nurse is booked onto the course in March. You now need to have a mentor before you can book onto the course. A nurse from The Cedars has agreed to be her mentor. We have an HCA on maternity leave and when she returns she will complete the course too.
3. **Telephones:** Since the telephones upgrade we now have some new data; 951 patients in January received a call back. The call back feature is not offered after 5.30pm or if you are less that number four in the queue. The average calls received between 8 and 9am on a Monday is 593. We have already increased the numbers of Care Navigators at 8am. On Wednesday and Thursday this number drops to an average of 157 incoming calls.
4. **Care Navigators:** We do have some new staff and some more experienced staff at present. It is not always easy to recruit due to other jobs paying more and some people are not always suitable for the role. It has become a lot more of a complex role in recent years hence the change of name to Care Navigator to give the role the respect it deserves.
5. **Appointments:** Becky created a Minor Illness Team consisting of ACPs and a Paramedic to widen the scope of the clinical team. The GPs are supporting collective action as GP practices have not received adequate funding, we are working with the LMC regarding this. Most appointments are now face to face but patients have a choice of face to face or telephone. We had 300 DNA’s in one month We have a full team of GPs and will not be recruiting any more. We are not protected from the National Insurance increase from April or the minimum wage increase. This is going to cost us an extra £35,000 a year.
6. **Practice Boundary:** We lost a lot of patients when we had several retirements and a GP that was on long term sick and we hit crisis so we closed our books to new patients which we have never done before. Our numbers were 12,500, they are now 11,600. This has huge financial implications and we are losing a lot of money because of this. We are an independent business and we have to be profitable in order to provide a service to our patients. We are fully doctored with more doctors per patient that the national average. We are looking to extend our boundary to St Margaret’s and Martin Mill especially now that the Home Visiting Service carry out some of our home visits. It was changed years ago and we kept patients we already had but if they moved to the next street they would need to register somewhere else. If GP practices need a locum GP you can claim from the ICB and for a GP on long term sick after 13 weeks you can claim on insurance. Maternity leave does not cover all eight session, it probably only covers four and a half. GPs do pay a hefty amount to cover sickesss.
7. **COVID Vaccinations:** The Spring Booster Campaign starts on 01.04.25 and we will be administering the vaccine to the eligible cohort. We are not licenced to give the vaccine to anyone not in the cohorts. We lost a huge amount of money to the pharmacies last year before we took on CPVID as well as flu vaccinations and we will be continuing this this winter.
8. **NHS App Event:** We are running an event at the practice on 17.03.25 from 1.30pm-3.00pm to support patients and help them with any issues around using or getting started on the NHS app. It is very straightforward to use.
9. **AOB:** One member asked if they were stopping the targets for LD patients. We have not heard of this but we have yet to see the new GP contact even though it takes effect from April. They may very well stop the targets but if it is good clinical care we will carry on doing it.

**Next Meeting Date: 23.06.25**